

## FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT



### God's Yes to Christ

**T***he resurrection of Jesus Christ is God's yes to Christ and his atoning work.* The cross was the end, the death of the Son of God, curse and judgment over all flesh. If the cross were the last word about Jesus, then the world would be without hope and lost in death and damnation. The world would have won the victory over God. But God, who alone achieved our salvation, awakened Christ from the dead. That was the new beginning that followed the end like a miracle from above, not according to a fixed law like spring, but out of the incomparable freedom and power of God, which smashes death. . . . The Son gains back his eternal divine glory; the Father has his Son again. Thus is Jesus confirmed and glorified as the Christ of God, which he was from the beginning. In this way, however, the vicarious atoning work of Jesus Christ is also acknowledged and accepted by God. On the cross Jesus had called out his cry of despair (Mark 15:34) and then commended himself into the hands of his Father, who was to make out of Jesus and his work whatever God wanted. In the resurrection of Christ, it became certain that God had said yes to his Son and his Son's work.



For our sake he cried on the cross: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Now we know that there is no longer any suffering on earth in which Christ will not be with us, suffering with us and praying with us — Christ the only helper.<sup>5</sup>

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Psalms*



When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Mark 15:33–34

## FIFTH MONDAY OF LENT



### God's Yes to Us

**T***he resurrection of Jesus Christ is God's yes to us.* Christ died for our sins; he was raised for our justification (Rom. 4:25). Christ's death was the judgment of death on us and our sins. Had Christ remained in death, this judgment of death would still be in force and we would still be in our sins (1 Cor. 15:17). But because Christ was raised from death, the judgment on us has been lifted, and we are resurrected with Christ (1 Cor. 15:20–23). This is so because we are in Jesus Christ by virtue of the adoption of our human nature in the incarnation. What happens to him happens to us, for we are adopted by him. That is not a judgment of experience but a judgment of God that must be acknowledged through faith in God's word.



Death is, to be sure, the irrevocable bitter end for body and soul. It is the wages of sin, and the remembrance of it is necessary (Psalms 39 and 90). On the other side of death, however, is the eternal God (Psalms 90 and 102). Therefore not death but life will triumph in the power of God. . . . We find this life in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and we ask for it in this life and in that to come.<sup>6</sup>

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Psalms*



For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. . . . Therefore his faith “was reckoned to him as righteousness.” Now the words, “it was reckoned to him,” were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

Romans 4:13, 22–25

## FIFTH TUESDAY OF LENT



### A New, Cleansing Wind

Easter? Our attention falls more on dying than on death. How we deal with dying is more important to us than how we conquer death. Socrates overcame dying; Christ overcame death.

“The last enemy to be destroyed is death” (1 Cor. 15:26). Dealing with dying doesn’t mean dealing with death. The overcoming of dying is within the realm of human possibilities; the overcoming of death means resurrection.

Based not on the art of dying, but on the resurrection of Christ, a new, cleansing wind can blow into the present world. . . . If a few people really believed this and let it affect the way they move in their earthly activity, a lot of things would change. To live on the basis of resurrection—that is what Easter means.

Most people do not know what their lives are actually based on. They are very much surrounded by mental confusion. There is an unconscious waiting for a resolving and liberating word. Yet the time has probably not yet arrived when it can be heard. But that time will come.



With your gospel, Lord, teach your congregation to die. Give us strength to endure until you call. We want to behold your eternal gospel! Amen. Amen.<sup>7</sup>

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Learning to Die,"  
sermon on 24 November 1935



Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

1 Corinthians 15:24–26





# PREPARING FOR HOLY WEEK



## SIXTH WEDNESDAY OF LENT



### We Are Beggars

**W**e stand before Good Friday and Easter, the days of the mighty deeds of God in history, the deeds in which the judgment and grace of God became visible to all the world: judgment in those hours in which Jesus Christ the Lord hung on the cross, grace in that hour in which death was swallowed up in victory. Human beings did nothing here; God did it all alone. He traveled the path to human beings in unending love. He has judged what is human and has given grace beyond all merit (Rom. 11:6). When the old Luther died, they found on his writing table a slip of paper on which in his last hours he had written these words: We are beggars in the Spirit. And that's the way it will remain, as long as there are human beings. But he who is King in the Spirit, the Lord of all life and all grace, lets us know that our hope and our life stand or fall with the grace of God. His is the deed; his is the way. His is the grace; his is the Spirit. And his is our service and our life. His is the honor above all creation.



The word of the justifying grace of God never departs from its position as the final word; it never yields itself simply as a result that has been achieved. . . . The word remains irreversibly the last; for otherwise it would be reduced to the quality of what is calculable, a merchandise, and would thereby be robbed of its divine character. Grace would be venal and cheap. It would not be a gift.<sup>1</sup>

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*



But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast.

Ephesians 2:4–9

## SIXTH THURSDAY OF LENT



### Able to Bear the Cross

Before Jesus takes his disciples with him into suffering, into humiliation and shame, into contempt, he gathers them around him and reveals himself to them as the Lord of God's glory (Matt. 17:1–9). Before the disciples have to descend with Jesus into the abyss of human guilt, evil, and hate, Jesus leads them up on a high mountain, from which their help is to come (Ps. 121:1). Before Jesus' face is struck and spit upon, before his clothing is torn and spattered with blood, the disciples are to see him in his divine brilliance. His face shines like the face of God, and the clothing he has on is dazzling white. It is an enormous grace that the same disciples who in Gethsemane are to experience Jesus' suffering with him can see him as the transfigured Son of God, as the eternal God. The disciples go to the cross with the knowledge of the resurrection. In this they are *entirely like us*. In this knowledge we are supposed to be able to bear the cross.



Thus the law of Christ is a law of bearing. Bearing means forbearing and sustaining. . . . The burden of men was so heavy for God Himself that He had to endure the Cross. God verily bore the burden of men in the body of Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup>

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*



Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him.

Luke 9:28–32

## SIXTH FRIDAY OF LENT



### Under the Cross

We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1). Thus, God's battle against us has now also been brought to an end. . . . Jesus Christ died for us on the cross, slain by the wrath of God. He was sent by God himself for this reason. . . . Miraculous mystery: God has made peace with us through Jesus Christ. Under the cross there is peace. Here there is the surrender to God's will; here is the end of our own will; here is rest and quiet in God; and here is the peace of conscience in the forgiveness of all our sins. Here under the cross is "access to this grace in which we stand" (Rom. 5:2), daily access to peace with God. In Jesus Christ alone, God's wrath is stilled, and we are overcome in the will of God. Therefore, the cross of Jesus Christ is for his church the eternal ground of joy and the hope of the coming glory of God. "We boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2). Here in the cross God's justice and victory have broken out on earth. Here this will one day become apparent to all the world. The peace that we receive here will become an eternal glorious peace in the kingdom of God.



The cross and the works of the cross, the poverty and renunciation of the blessed in the beatitudes, these are the things which will become visible. . . . If the good works were a galaxy of human virtues, we should then have to glorify the disciples, not God.<sup>3</sup>

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*



Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God.

Romans 5:1–2

## SIXTH SATURDAY OF LENT



### The New Creation

**T**he dead Jesus Christ of Good Friday and the resurrected Lord of Easter Sunday: this is the creation out of nothingness, creation from the beginning. The fact that Christ was dead did not mean the possibility of his resurrection: it meant the impossibility; it was nothingness itself. There is absolutely no transition, no continuum between the dead and the resurrected Christ other than the freedom of God, which created his work from nothingness in the beginning. . . . He, who is the beginning, lives, annihilates the nothingness, and creates the new creation in his resurrection. From his resurrection we know about the creation, for if he were not raised, the Creator would be dead and would not bear witness to himself. From his creation, however, we know once again about the power of his resurrection, because he remains the Lord of the nothingness.



In our concern with the origin and nature of human beings, it would be a hopeless effort for us to attempt to make a gigantic leap back into the world of the lost beginning. It is hopeless for us to want to know for ourselves what the original human being was like. . . . Such attempts fail to understand that we can know about the original human beings only if we start from Christ.<sup>4</sup>

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, lectures  
on "Creation and Fall," 1932–33



In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

Genesis 1:1–3